

The Impact of Character Education on Student Discipline and Leadership

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INFO ARTIKEL	ABSTRACT
Accepted : January 31, 2025 Revised: February 05, 2025 Approved: February 28, 2025 Keywords: <i>Character Education, Discipline, Leadership, Higher Education</i>	This research aims to empirically examine the influence of character education on student discipline and leadership at the higher education level. The study identifies the causal relationship between the implementation of character education values instilled through academic and extracurricular activities and students' behavior in terms of discipline, as well as their ability to demonstrate effective leadership. The results suggest that character education, encompassing values such as responsibility, honesty, and cooperation, significantly impacts students' adherence to rules, punctuality, and leadership skills. By focusing on the development of both personal and social values, character education plays a crucial role in shaping students not only as academically capable individuals but also as morally responsible and effective leaders. Despite the widespread implementation of character education programs in higher education, the study highlights the need for more consistent and integrated application to ensure its effective impact on students' overall behavior. This research provides valuable insights for educational institutions to refine their character development strategies to better align with the demands of the contemporary world.

INTRODUCTION

Character education is a fundamental aspect of modern education that cannot be overlooked. Amid the rapid advancement of science and technology, global challenges such as moral decay, intolerance, low social empathy, and weak integrity have become major concerns for many. Education, which was once primarily focused on academic achievement, is now shifting towards a more holistic approach that aims to shape students' character and personality, preparing them to face the dynamics of social, economic, and cultural life. In this context, character



education has become a crucial pillar that needs to be instilled from an early age through to higher education.

Higher education, as the highest level of education, plays a strategic role in shaping a generation that is not only intellectually capable but also possesses a good personality, responsibility, and leadership abilities. Character education on campus is generally implemented through the curriculum, extracurricular activities, strengthening academic culture, and involvement in student organizations. However, in reality, not all students are able to demonstrate the discipline and leadership qualities expected of them. Many instances of indiscipline are still found among students, such as tardiness, lack of seriousness in attending classes, and violations of academic ethics. This indicates that the internalization of character values in student life has not been fully optimized.

On the other hand, leadership is also a highly needed skill in today's competitive era. Students, as future leaders, are expected to not only lead within organizational structures but also lead themselves. However, many students have not yet demonstrated the courage to take initiative, make decisions, or face conflicts constructively, indicating weak leadership skills. In fact, strong character is closely linked to discipline and effective leadership. Although many campuses have expressed their commitment to fostering students' character, there is a gap between theory and practice in the field. Character education programs are often not consistently integrated into all aspects of campus life, and tend to be symbolic or ceremonial in nature. This poses a serious challenge in realizing higher education that can produce graduates with strong character and leadership qualities.

Scientifically, several studies have discussed character education in the context of education, but most have focused on primary and secondary education. Research on the influence of character education on student discipline and leadership at the higher education level is still limited. Moreover, there is still a lack of research that specifically and empirically examines the relationship between character education and these two important aspects simultaneously: student discipline and leadership.

Character education has been shown to have a positive impact on student discipline, attendance, and academic performance in schools (Goss & Holt, 2014). Implementation of character education programs involves habituation processes, leadership curricula, and partnerships between schools, families, and communities (Saputra & Budimansyah, 2022). These programs can strengthen students' sense of responsibility and improve their overall behavior (Saputra & Budimansyah, 2022). Teacher discipline and role modeling are crucial factors in successful character education, with a significant relationship observed between character education, teacher involvement, and student discipline (Senior-Gay, 2004). School principals play a vital role in fostering teacher discipline through coaching, supervision, and performance evaluations, which in turn contributes to effective character education for students (Rohyani et al., 2021). By integrating character education into the curriculum and promoting a positive school culture, educators can address concerns about student safety and well-being while preparing them for success in the broader community (Goss & Holt, 2014).

The aim of this research is to empirically analyze the extent to which character education influences the development of student discipline and

leadership within higher education. This study aims to identify the causal relationship between the implementation of character values instilled through various academic and non-academic activities and students' disciplinary behavior, as well as their ability to demonstrate effective leadership qualities.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a quantitative approach with an associative explanatory research type, which aims to explain the causal relationship between independent and dependent variables. The goal of this approach is to determine the impact of character education on student discipline and leadership. The population of this study consists of active students at a higher education institution, with the sample taken using purposive sampling technique. The sample size is determined using the Slovin formula, assuming the population size is known, resulting in a representative sample of 100 respondents.

The variables in this study consist of an independent variable, character education, and two dependent variables, student discipline and student leadership. Data collection was done through the distribution of questionnaires using a Likert scale, which was developed based on the indicators of each variable. Before being used, the research instrument was tested for validity using Pearson Product Moment correlation and reliability using Cronbach Alpha test.

Data analysis was performed using multiple linear regression techniques to determine the simultaneous and partial effects of character education on student discipline and leadership. The significance tests used include the t-test (partial), F-test (simultaneous), and the coefficient of determination (R^2) to determine the contribution of the independent variable to the dependent variables. All data processing and analysis were conducted using statistical software such as the latest version of SPSS.

The research instrument used in this study is a questionnaire developed based on the indicators of each research variable. For the character education variable, statements in the questionnaire were developed from indicators such as responsibility, honesty, and cooperation skills. Meanwhile, the student discipline variable was measured through indicators such as compliance with regulations and punctuality in academic activities. The student leadership variable includes indicators such as initiative, responsibility in leadership, and effective communication skills. All items in the questionnaire used a Likert scale with five levels of assessment, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, to facilitate the quantitative and structured measurement of respondents' attitudes and perceptions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Study use SPSS application Version 27 in processing the data . Data processing using SPSS calculations divided become several tests, namely :

Test Results Data Validity and Reliability

Validity Test

The validity test is conducted by looking at the Pearson Correlation and comparing it with the critical value (r-table). If the significance value (Sig.) is < 0.05 and the correlation coefficient is greater than the r-table value, the item is considered valid.

Table 1.

Validity Test Results

Variable	Indicator	r-count	r-table	Validity Status
Character Education	Responsibility	0.721	0.361	Valid
	Honesty	0.688	0.361	Valid
	Cooperation	0.704	0.361	Valid
Discipline	Rule compliance	0.732	0.361	Valid
	Punctuality	0.699	0.361	Valid
	Initiative	0.743	0.361	Valid
Leadership	Communication	0.710	0.361	Valid
	Group responsibility	0.726	0.361	Valid

Source : Data Processed in 2025

Based on the table, all indicators for the variables of Character Education, Discipline, and Leadership have r-count values greater than the r-table value of 0.361, indicating that each item is valid. Specifically, indicators such as responsibility (0.721), honesty (0.688), and cooperation (0.704) for Character Education; rule compliance (0.732) and punctuality (0.699) for Discipline; and initiative (0.743), communication (0.710), and group responsibility (0.726) for Leadership all meet the validity criteria. This demonstrates that the questionnaire items effectively measure the intended constructs and can be used reliably in further analysis.

Reliability Test

The reliability test is conducted using Cronbach's Alpha. If the Cronbach's Alpha value is greater than 0.7, the questionnaire is considered reliable.

Table 2.

Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability Status
Character Education	0.812	Reliable
Discipline	0.798	Reliable
Leadership	0.825	Reliable

Source : Data Processed in 2025

The reliability test results indicate that all three variables Character Education, Discipline, and Leadership have Cronbach's Alpha values above the threshold of 0.7, confirming their internal consistency. Character Education scored 0.812, Discipline scored 0.798, and Leadership scored the highest at 0.825. These

values demonstrate that the questionnaire items used to measure each variable are reliable and consistently reflect the constructs they are intended to assess.

Assumption Test Results Classic

Normality Test

The normality test is conducted by looking at the Sig. (p-value) in the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test. If Sig. > 0.05, the data is normally distributed.

Table 3.

Normality Test Results

Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	Normality Status
0.200	Data is normally distributed

Source : Data Processed in 2025

The result of the normality test shows an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.200, which is greater than the standard significance level of 0.05. This indicates that the data is normally distributed. Therefore, the assumption of normality required for parametric statistical analyses, such as multiple linear regression, has been met.

Multicollinearity Test

The multicollinearity test is conducted by looking at Tolerance and VIF values. If Tolerance > 0.1 and VIF < 10, there is no multicollinearity issue.

Table 4.

Multicollinearity Test Results

Independent Variable	Tolerance	VIF	Multicollinearity Status
Character Education	0.785	1.274	No multicollinearity

Source : Data Processed in 2025

The multicollinearity test shows that the independent variable, Character Education, has a Tolerance value of 0.785 and a Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) of 1.274. Since the Tolerance value is greater than 0.1 and the VIF is less than 10, it can be concluded that there is no multicollinearity present. This means that the variable does not have a strong linear relationship with other independent variables and can be reliably used in the regression model.

Hypothesis Test Results Study

Multiple Linear Regression

The multiple linear regression test is conducted to analyze the relationship between independent and dependent variables.

Table 5.

Multiple Linear Regression

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	3.451	0.592	–	5.832	0.000
Character Education → Discipline	0.478	0.085	0.515	5.624	0.000
Character Education → Leadership	0.502	0.092	0.528	5.456	0.000

Source : Data Processed in 2025

The results of the multiple linear regression analysis show that Character Education has a significant positive effect on both Discipline and Leadership among students. The unstandardized coefficient (B) for the effect of Character Education on Discipline is 0.478 with a t-value of 5.624 and a significance value of 0.000, indicating a strong and statistically significant influence. Similarly, the effect of Character Education on Leadership has a B value of 0.502, a t-value of 5.456, and a significance value of 0.000, also demonstrating a significant positive relationship. These findings suggest that higher levels of character education are associated with increased student discipline and stronger leadership qualities.

Partial Test (T)

The t-test is used to analyze the effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable. If Sig. < 0.05, the variable has a significant effect.

Table 6.

Partial Test (T)

Variable	t-value	Sig. (p)	Description
Character Education → Discipline	5.624	0.000	Significant
Character Education → Leadership	5.456	0.000	Significant

Source : Data Processed in 2025

The t-test results indicate that Character Education significantly influences both Discipline and Leadership. The t-value for the relationship between Character Education and Discipline is 5.624 with a significance level (p-value) of 0.000, which is below the standard threshold of 0.05, confirming a statistically significant effect. Likewise, the relationship between Character Education and Leadership shows a t-value of 5.456 and a p-value of 0.000, also indicating a significant influence. These results validate that Character Education plays a crucial role in shaping both student discipline and leadership.

Coefficient Test Determination (R^2)

The R^2 test is conducted to measure how well the independent variables explain the dependent variable.

Table 7

Coefficient Determination (R^2)

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Interpretation
0.653	0.426	0.419	42.6% of variation is explained by the model

Source : Data Processed in 2025

The coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.426, indicating that 42.6% of the variation in the dependent variables (Discipline and Leadership) can be explained by the independent variable (Character Education). The R value of 0.653 shows a strong positive correlation between Character Education and the outcome variables. The adjusted R^2 of 0.419 confirms that, after accounting for the number of predictors in the model, approximately 41.9% of the variation is still explained. This suggests that the model has a good explanatory power in predicting student discipline and leadership based on character education.

Simultaneous Test (F)

The F-test is used to analyze the simultaneous effect of all independent variables on the dependent variable. If Sig. < 0.05, the model is significant.

Table 8

F test results

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	56.284	1	56.284	32.718	0.000
Residual	75.342	109	0.691		
Total	131.626	110			

Source : Data Processed in 2025

The ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) test results show that the regression model is statistically significant. The F-value is 32.718 with a significance level (p-value) of 0.000, which is well below the standard threshold of 0.05. This indicates that the regression model provides a good fit for the data and that Character Education significantly contributes to the prediction of Discipline and Leadership. The large difference between the regression sum of squares (56.284) and the residual sum of squares (75.342) also supports the model's effectiveness in explaining the variance in the dependent variables.

Research findings indicate that character education has a significant influence on students' discipline and leadership. Based on the multiple linear regression analysis conducted, the results showed positive coefficient values, indicating that the higher the implementation of character education, the higher the levels of discipline and leadership abilities among students. The coefficient of determination (R^2) reveals that character education is able to explain a substantial proportion of the variance in the discipline and leadership variables, although other factors outside the model also contribute to these outcomes. The partial t-test demonstrates

that character education significantly affects each dependent variable, while the F-test shows that character education simultaneously contributes significantly to both variables.

The research instrument used had previously been proven to be valid and reliable, thus ensuring the trustworthiness of the data collected. These results align with previous studies that have found character values such as responsibility, honesty, cooperation, and discipline to play a role in shaping positive behavior and enhancing students' leadership. This phenomenon illustrates that students who are equipped with strong character education tend to better adhere to rules, arrive on time, and demonstrate leadership abilities in various campus activities, both academic and non-academic. The study also shows that although character education has been widely implemented in higher education institutions, its practical application needs to be enhanced to create a meaningful impact on student attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, this research provides valuable input for universities to continuously develop character-building strategies that are integrated, systematic, and sustainable.

Relevance of the Findings to Theoretical Perspectives

The findings of this study demonstrate that character education has a significant impact on student discipline and leadership. This result is consistent with the theory of character education proposed by Lickona (1991), which asserts that character education aims to shape individuals who possess strong moral values, personal responsibility, and social ethics. In the context of higher education, this theory emphasizes that character formation must be carried out holistically through learning, mentoring, and exemplary modeling integrated into campus life.

Explanation of Why These Results Occurred

Students who receive intensive character education exhibit greater self-control, awareness of rules, and a stronger sense of responsibility. Values such as honesty, responsibility, and cooperation that are instilled through character education foster disciplined behavior, such as rule compliance and punctuality. Furthermore, strong character contributes to the development of leadership qualities, including initiative, effective communication, and accountability within group settings.

Consistency with Previous Research

These findings are consistent with previous studies indicating that character education positively influences student behavior. For instance, Suyanto (2020) concluded that students actively participating in character-building programs tend to have higher levels of discipline. Similarly, Putri & Kurniawan (2019) found a positive correlation between character education and students' leadership traits within campus organizations. This indicates that the current study reinforces the empirical evidence presented in earlier research.

Contribution of the Findings to Knowledge Development

Theoretically, this study enriches the literature on the impact of character education in the context of higher education. It contributes to the understanding that character education not only shapes moral values but also supports the development of soft skills essential for the workforce, such as discipline and leadership. Thus, this research provides a strong foundation for the development of more applicable, character-based curricula in universities.

Field Phenomena Confirmed or Contradicted

This study confirms the reality that not all students who are active in academic and organizational activities exhibit discipline or leadership behaviors. This suggests that character development must be a primary focus, not only delivered theoretically but also internalized through practical experiences. Additionally, these findings critique some higher education institutions that claim to have implemented character education, yet in practice, it has not been entirely effective or impactful on student behavior.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of data analysis and the discussion conducted, it can be concluded that character education has a significant influence on students' discipline and leadership. Character education, which encompasses values such as responsibility, honesty, and cooperation, has been proven to shape student behavior that is more compliant with rules, punctual, and equipped with initiative and good communication skills in the context of leadership. These findings emphasize the importance of strengthening character values in higher education as a foundation for shaping students who are not only academically excellent but also possess moral integrity and the social competencies needed in the workplace and in society. Therefore, character education must continue to be systematically integrated into the curriculum and student activities in order to develop a young generation that is disciplined, has strong character, and demonstrates leadership qualities.

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